

7TH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, FP7

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Glossary*

The 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) is the main financial instrument for support of research and development in the EU which covers almost all scientific disciplines. The goals of FP7 primarily relate to promoting research and maintaining the competitiveness of European industry, supporting scientific and technological excellence and strengthening the leadership role of Europe in the global knowledge-based economy. The purpose of the programme is to help attain the ambitiously set goals formulated in the Lisbon Strategy, especially the goal that by 2010 the EU will become the “most dynamic competitive knowledge-based economy in the world”. FP7 extends over a period of seven years, that is from 2007 to 2013, it has a budget of 50 billion EUR and is the largest civilian programme for financial research and development in the world.

FP7 consists of four specific programmes:

- *cooperation* – support to international cooperation in research, aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of European production;

- *ideas* – support for pioneer research in the form of financing multi-discipline research projects by individual teams;
- *people* – support for the further education, mobility and professional development of researchers;
- *capacities* – support for strengthening and optimal use of research and innovation capacities throughout Europe.

As well as these four categories, some funds have been allocated for nuclear research and education (EURATOM).

More than half the total budget funds of FP7 are intended to finance ten thematic areas as part of the specific *Cooperation* programme. They are: health, food, information and telecommunications technology, nanoscience, energy, the environment, transport, social-economic and humanist sciences, security and space.

The appropriate institutions can apply to the FP7, such as universities, research centres, businesses – especially small and medium-sized enterprises, or independent researchers. Participation is open to entities

* Received: September 3, 2009

Accepted: September 15, 2009

from all countries, and they are divided into several categories: EU27 member states, associated countries (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Israel, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia), international partner countries (some African, Asian, South American and Mediterranean countries) and third countries. Depending on the category, the conditions of participation vary in many specific work programmes.

Individuals and organizations who wish to participate in FP7 programmes register their projects by responding to the calls for proposals published on the official internet site of the programme (<http://cordis.europa.eu>). Projects are usually drawn up within a consortium which includes complementary members from industry and science. In order to take part in the programme, usually three different legal entities are needed from different member states or candidate countries.

The European Commission publishes concrete plans for implementation of the four specific programmes (*Cooperation, Ideas, People, Capacities*) in its annual Work Programmes. For example, each of the ten areas from the *Cooperation* programme has its own work programme in which there are Topics for projects with precisely defined conditions, issues and expected results. Work programmes also contain a schedule of calls for proposals, which will be published throughout the year. All these calls are published in the Official Journal of the EU and on the FP7 web site.

The proposals of projects prepared for the published calls are submitted to the European Commission by multinational consortia. They are founded to ensure excellence and maximum expertise, with the comparative advantages of individual researchers taken into account. Proposals are prepared and submitted by the coordinator of the consortium, in cooperation with the

partners. The coordinator is also responsible for the project idea. The consortium concludes a consortium contract, which regulates its mutual relations. The coordinator is the only one who makes direct contact with the person in Brussels (*Project Officer*) responsible for project implementation. The role of coordinator is very demanding, both in a scientific and administrative sense, so most projects, as well as a coordinator, also have scientific and financial managers.

Projects within the FP7 system are financed on the principle of co-financing. This means that the European Commission does not "buy" research services by paying the full price of the research. That is to say, it gives a grant for projects so that it participates with a certain percentage of the funding in the total costs of the research. The percentage of participation by the European Commission in the cost of the project depends on the funding scheme, the legal status of the participants and the type of activity.

The FP7 is financially very generous, but it is technically, administratively and scientifically a very demanding and complex system, which requires from researchers thorough and long-term work in preparation and implementation of scientific projects.

LITERATURE

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